



MEETING SUMMARY

March 26, 2004

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council was held on Friday, March 26, 2004, at the Medical Society of New Jersey headquarters in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by William Agress, Chair, who presided and declared a quorum present.

ATTENDANCE – Attachment #1

WELCOME/CHAIR'S REPORT – William Agress

1. The Chair welcomed those present, acknowledging the large number of public members in attendance. At his request, *SICC members and public members* identified themselves and their connection with early intervention.
2. The Chair briefly reviewed the *summary of correspondence* since the 1/23/04 meeting attached to the agenda. He made special reference to his testimony before the Senate Budget/Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee (copies available).
3. The Governor's office has forwarded *nominations to fill five SICC member vacancies*, two of which are parents and one the legislative representative. When these nominees are officially confirmed, SICC members will be informed by email.
4. Discussed was the desirability of confirming *SICC meeting dates/location* beyond those already scheduled to July 23, 2004. Meeting as far as possible on the fourth Friday of alternating months, the following schedule was unanimously adopted – upon motion by Marie Coll, seconded by Bonnie Bogdanoff (**all meetings on Fridays at MSNJ headquarters**):

October 1, 2004	(Yom Kippur is Saturday, September 25 th)
November 19, 2004	(Thanksgiving is November 26 th)
January 28, 2005	
March 18, 2005	(Good Friday is March 25 th)
May 21, 2005	(Memorial Day is May 30 th)
July 22, 2005	
September 23, 2005	
November 18, 2005	(Thanksgiving is November 25 th)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the *January 23, 2004 meeting* were unanimously approved as distributed – upon motion by Mary Lotze, seconded by Susan Richmond.

SICC COMMITTEES

1. **Interagency** – Mary Jo Tivenan-Mackintosh, Chair

Ms. Tivenan-Mackintosh reported on a meeting held earlier this morning.

- * The committee is moving ahead on the *case study pilot of a child with autism* in early intervention attending childcare in a regular center.
- * The committee reviewed December 1, 2003 data with Terry Harrison and will be assessing the *need of childcare for children with special needs*.
- * Ms. Tivenan-Mackintosh will be attending the Lakewood Children's Home Society to *review firsthand family providers' children going to daycare*.

2. **Administration** – Susan Richmond for Jennifer DeMauro, Chair

Ms. Richmond reported on the committee's January 7th meeting.

A. Distributed, reviewed and unanimously adopted – upon motion by Ms. Richmond, seconded by Toni Spiotta – was the *SICC administrative budget for FY 2005* (attached to file copy of minutes).

B. Distributed and reviewed was a draft of the *Early Intervention Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2003* (attached to file copy of minutes). The following two additional APPENDICIES were included: (1) Single Points of Entry (Celeste Andriot Wood to supply current listing); (2) directions to Medical Society of New Jersey (with SICC meeting dates). It was agreed (1) to list SICC members serving during the report period as well as those newly appointed (if received in time), with dates of membership indicated in some manner; and (2) to order a total of 2,500 copies. Feedback on the draft must be received by Ms. Richmond within the next two weeks. Ms. Lotze and Mr. Agress will do final proof-reading.

3. **System Definition/Communication** – Toni Spiotta, Chair

Ms. Spiotta reported on a meeting held this morning. An outline for *new member orientation* and an *SICC member manual* have been finalized and will be available in June 2004. The committee continues to work on an SICC website.

4. **Family Support** – Lauren Agoratus and Joseph Holahan, Co-Chairs

Ms. Agoratus reported on a meeting held this morning (attachment #2, supplied by her). The Council discussed recent media publicity on termination (within three months) of *Project Child*, which has provided early intervention services to local communities (primarily Mercer

SICC COMMITTEES (continued)

County). Ms. Harrison gave assurance that the Lead Agency has been working to insure an easy transition of services to these families, which should be completed by July 1, 2004.

5. Ad Hoc Family Support Vision – Susan Richmond, Chair

Ms. Richmond distributed a copy of the *survey mailed to 215 key stakeholders* in early intervention (attached to file copy of minutes) – previously discussed at the 1/12/04 SICC meeting. The committee will meet April 26 to review survey results.

LEAD AGENCY – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Celeste Andriot Wood, Assistant Commissioner, and Terry Harrison, Part C Coordinator

1. Ms. Wood reported on the *proposed 2005 state budget*, which included a \$10 million increase in the early intervention budget -- net increase of \$6 million (\$4 million from the state budget which, last year, was received from the Catastrophic Fund), with \$3 million anticipated revenue from the family cost share system. The Administration has been supportive of the Early Intervention System, which this past year served 14,000 children and experienced over 11% growth.

2. Contract for the *Centralized Management Office (CMO)* was effective February 9, 2004. The CMO will provide authorization of services, agency and practitioner enrollment, claiming and payment for services; explanation of benefits to families, collection of family cost share, and insurance billing. In addition, the CMO will provide data that can be used for accountability, quality control and identification of potential problems in the system.

3. Ms. Harrison distributed materials (attached to file copy of minutes) and discussed:

A. Letter with summary of public comments/testimony that was sent to *all those who submitted public comment* (oral or written) regarding the proposed changes on family cost participation policy and procedures.

B. *Process For Handling Families That Refuse to Accept/Reject the Family Cost Share* (policy is consistent with federal guidelines), including *family cost share extraordinary expenses* (definition, allowable extraordinary expenses and documentation required; policy is in place for families that cannot document income). The process was initiated March 1st for new families entering the system; families currently in the system will be phased in over a 90-day period.

C. *December 1, 2003 Table 1 child count*. Additional data will be shared following review and cleanup of REIC data from the December 1 data audit of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP).

4. Ms. Harrison elaborated on the *Central Management Office (CMO)* and progress with implementation. Tentatively, practitioner enrollment will begin implementation April 9, 2004.

LEAD AGENCY (continued)

The Single Point of Entry (SPOE) Software will be modified for New Jersey and implemented through the REICs by the end of April, with billing dated May 1, 2004 forward to come under Covansys. Michael Weisman has been hired as CMO Coordinator. At the May 28th SICC meeting, Ms. Harrison will give a 30-minute demonstration of the data base software (*SPOE – Single Point of Entry*).

5. Ms. Harrison reported that the *Family Rights Book* has been translated into Spanish. *IFSP forms* are currently being translated and should be available in the near future.

6. Nashon Hornsby, Procedural Safeguards Coordinator, distributed/discussed the *Process for Handling Informal Complaints* (attached to file copy of minutes), which offers advice and guidance as to how the process should flow. He is working on drafting Early Intervention System regulations. A draft will be shared with the regulation workgroup in the next 4-8 weeks. The regulations should be in final “package” form by the end of the year.

7. Mr. Hornsby reported that, since January 26, *eleven requests for mediation* and one due process hearing were resolved informally.

REIC UPDATES

Cynthia Newman, Mid-Jersey Cares REIC director, was complimented on a poster (distributed/ attached to file copy of minutes) highlighting “...information about resources and services for your child under age 3” in her region. *Jennifer Buzby, Southern REIC director*, and *Patti Ciccone, Northeast REIC director*, briefly highlighted activities in their regions. All three directors met with families to discuss cost share and experienced no major complaints. One area of concern the directors questioned was why families at the higher economic end were not choosing early intervention services.

The Chair reported that at the *Ms. Ciccone was honored annual SPAN conference* with the 2003 Diana Cuthbertson Parent-Professional Collaboration Award.

INTERAGENCY UPDATES

Barbara Tkach reported that Governor McGreevy announced the *Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI)*, which will increase access to preschool for four-year-olds statewide. The anticipated appropriation of \$15,000,000 for FY 2005 will fund approximately 4,000 low income children’s participation through a competitive award process. Districts already receiving Early Childhood Program Aid, with the exclusion of Abbott districts, are eligible for funding to increase from half day to full day programs. Detailed information and instructions for ELLI are available on the Department of Education website at <http://www.nj.gov/njded/ece/>.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Bogdanoff questioned the *status of IDEA federal legislation* and the concern that people may not have an opportunity to express opinions. Ms. Harrison said that Part C is not a primary focus of concern, but she will keep the SICC apprised of its status.

NEW BUSINESS – There was none.

MISCELLANEOUS

Gerry Kitzhoffer called attention to St. Joseph School for the Blind's *outreach program* in partnership with several organizations/state agencies (including EIS) to inform parents of children with visual and other disabilities the full range of services/educational opportunities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Issues addressed by public members included: (1) following families who opt out of the early intervention system, including those at the high income level; (2) possibility of using funds from DDD and/or Catastrophic Fund to offset family cost share; (3) availability of private funds in many communities to support children with special needs; (4) concern with the growing demand for speech therapy; (5) importance of continuing to support the extensive work done in the past by stakeholders, while moving ahead with new systems and provisions.

SICC responses to the above were: (1) provision has been made by the EIS for following those who opt out of the system; (2) not possible for a variety of reasons; (3) parents should investigate at their local level; (4) the Lead Agency is working on therapy specific guidelines to alleviate some of the shortages; (5) much of the "moving ahead" was initiated from those sources.

ADJOURNMENT – 1:10 p.m.

APPROVED
5/21/04